

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of the claims set forth below will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-11 (canceled)

12. (Currently amended) A bone fixation system comprising:

a bone plate having a plurality of plate holes for receiving a bone anchor therein, and
a plurality of bone anchors for coupling the bone plate to bone,
at least one of the bone anchors having a tapered proximal head and a distal portion configured to engage bone, the proximal head of the at least one anchor having an outer surface tapering at a taper angle toward the distal portion of the bone anchor,
at least one of the plates holes having a bushing positioned therein for receiving the proximal head of the bone anchor, the bushing having a generally stepped-shaped inner wall surface provided by a plurality of steps formed in the inner wall of the bushing, a plurality of the steps having a generally annular peak, ~~a plurality of the peaks~~ being aligned in a generally frusta-conical shape that tapers at a peak angle distally from a proximal surface of the bushing to a distal surface of the bushing, the taper angle of the outer surface of the proximal head of the bone anchor being generally equal to the peak angle of the peaks, the peaks of the bushing engaging the outer surface of the proximal head of the bone anchor to facilitate gripping engagement of the tapered proximal head of a the bone anchor upon advancement of the bone anchor into the bushing, the engagement of the outer surface of the tapered proximal head of the bone anchor by the peaks being sufficient to lock the bone anchor to the bushing.

13. (Previously presented) The bone fixation system of claim 12, wherein each annular peak of the bushing defines a peak plane that intersects the axis of the bushing.

14. (Previously presented) The bone fixation system of claim 13, wherein at least one of the peak planes is oriented perpendicular to the axis of the bushing.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Original) The bone fixation system of claim 13, wherein a plurality of the peak planes are parallel to one another.